



Environnement
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Canada

Français

Contact Us

Help

Search

Canada Site

What's New

Topics

Publications

Weather

Home

About Us

About
LEVEL news

LEVEL news



Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Water Levels

Contents

Serious Threat of
Flooding Remains

Lake Ontario
Peaked but High
Outflows Continue

Tug Boat Mishap in
the St. Marys River

May Precipitation

May Outflows

Water Levels for the
Great Lakes and
Montreal Harbour
... a monthly bulletin
from Canadian
Hydrographic
Service

About the monthly
Water Level bulletin

May Precipitation
Over the Great
Lakes

As a percentage of
the long-term May
average:

Great Lakes 102%
Basin

Lake Erie 160%
(including
Lake St.
Clair)

Lake 84%
Superior

Lakes 98%
Michigan-
Huron

Lake Ontario 84%

Note: These figures
are preliminary.

May Outflows From
the Great Lakes

Volume 5, Number 6

June 6, 1997

Lake Levels Continue to Increase

Serious Threat of Flooding Remains

Water levels on all of the Great Lakes increased slightly more than anticipated during May. High water levels continue to pose a very serious threat of flood and storm damage to shoreline properties.

Large inflows to Lakes Superior and Huron occurred during the first half of May, due to above average snowmelt and rainfall, and pushed up levels of these lakes. Drier conditions during the last half of the month slowed the increase in lake levels.

Lakes St. Clair and Erie received above average rainfall throughout the month. Rains during the first part of the month were mostly absorbed by the land portion of the basin, and lake levels remained relatively constant during that time. However, as the rains continued, levels of these two lakes increased during the last half of the month.

The beginning of June levels on all the lakes were well above seasonal average, ranging from 23 cm on Lake Superior, to as much as 69 cm on Lake Erie.

Lake Ontario's level appeared to have peaked for the year in mid May, and its decline may have begun. Lakes Erie and St. Clair are just about at their season's peak now. Further rises in the levels of Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron are expected in June.

Montreal Harbour levels reached their peak in early May and at times threatened facilities at the harbour. The levels since then have declined, and the decline is expected to continue.

Lake Ontario Peaked, but High Outflows Continue

Lake Ontario's level increased rapidly during the first half of May, but it appeared to have reached its peak for the year in the third week of the month. Lake Ontario's level during the last two weeks of May averaged about 75.36 metres, which was about 14 cm above the late May levels of one year ago, but some 25 cm below the high levels experienced in 1993. In view of continuing high levels on Lake Ontario and upstream on Lake Erie, the International St.

As a percentage of
the long-term May
average:

Lake Superior	144%
Lake Erie	123%
Lake Huron	113%
Lake Ontario	115%

Note: These figures
are preliminary.

[Last Issue](#)

[Next Issue](#)

[Issue Index](#)

Lawrence River Board of Control is continuing to discharge maximum possible outflows from the lake into the St. Lawrence River without endangering the safety of Seaway navigation.

Water levels on Lake St. Louis near Montreal were extremely high and just below flood stage since April 6 as a result of high flows from Lake Ontario and the Ottawa River. This risk of flooding on Lake St. Louis limited outflows from Lake Ontario during much of April and May. By late May, with Ottawa River flows declining, conditions on Lake St. Louis improved to the point where there no longer exists a threat of flooding in the Montreal area.

In order to maximize Lake Ontario's outflow during May without causing downstream flooding, outflows from the lake were changed fourteen times. These flow changes are available for viewing on the Worldwide Web. At the end of May, Lake Ontario's outflow was 9600 cubic metres per second (339,000 cubic feet per second).

Tug Boat Mishap in the St. Marys River

Summary information for
"LEVELnews"

On May 19, a tug boat got drawn by high currents into the upstream side of the control structure in the St. Marys River at Sault Ste. Marie. At the time, the tug was positioning a work barge to prepare for repairs to two of the sixteen gates.

There were some minor damage to a gate but no one was injured. Several open gates in the control structure had to be temporarily closed to enable salvage operations, and the tug was refloated and removed on May 24.

Lake Superior outflow during the five days was reduced from 3200 cubic metres per second to 2650 cubic metres per second. To offset the flow reduction, sluice gates at the U.S. government hydropower plant and at the Great Lakes Power Limited plant in Canada were opened after the tug was removed in order to increase flows at these plants.

[Top of Page](#)

[Français](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Help](#) | [Search](#) | [Canada Site](#)
[What's New](#) | [Topics](#) | [Publications](#) | [Weather](#) | [Home](#) | [About Us](#)

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Webmaster

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URL: <http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/water/level-news/lvn97jun.html>



